FILE 16: Spring Thunder

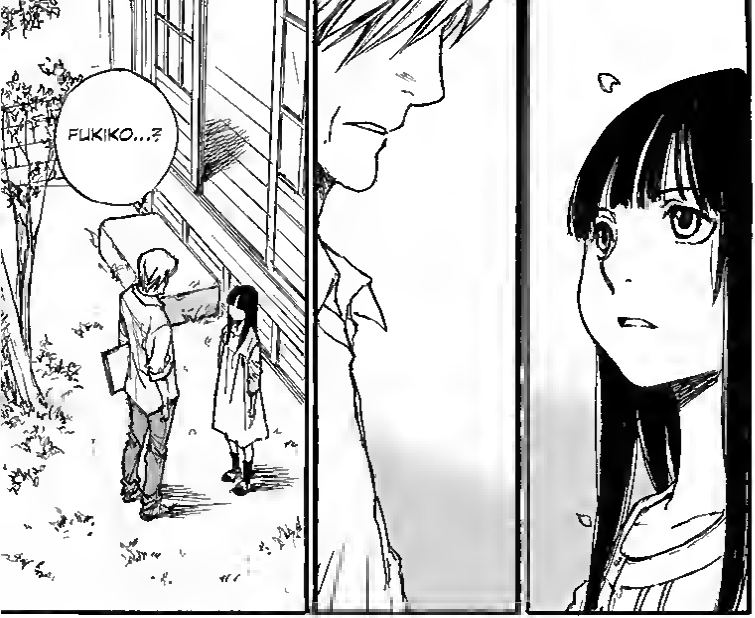
The sakura had just blossomed, the petals drifting on the wind.

Spring was winding down, a hint of chill still in the air.

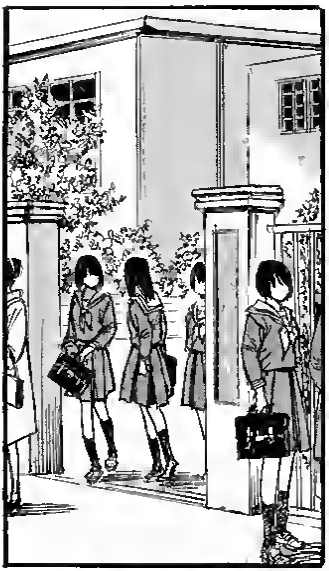
I arrived at the cottage in Yokohama that my grandmother had left me.

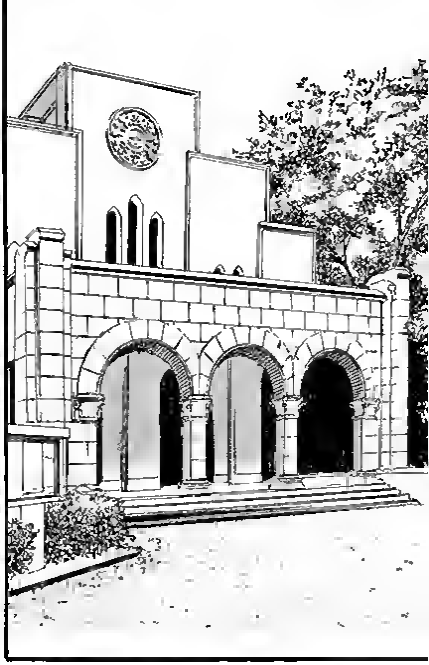
I found an old picture in the drawer.
It was of a man. I knew who he was
He was the one my grandmother had kept secret, till the very end.
The man whose memory she'd held cherished in her heart

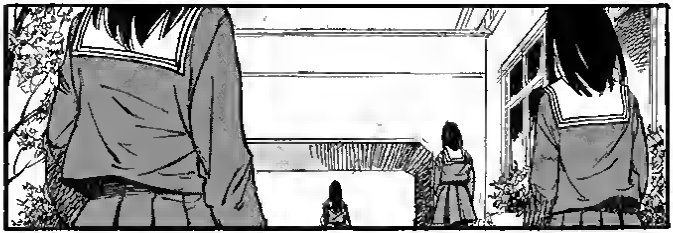
I BROUGHT HIM HERE.
I ONLY HAD TO TELL HIM ABOUT YOU,
AND HE SAID HE HAD TO SEE YOU.


FUKIKO...?

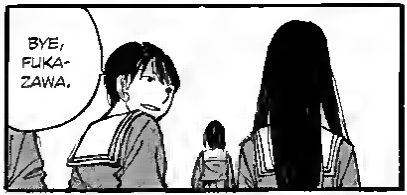
YOU...
YOU REMEMBER MY GRAND-MOTHER?



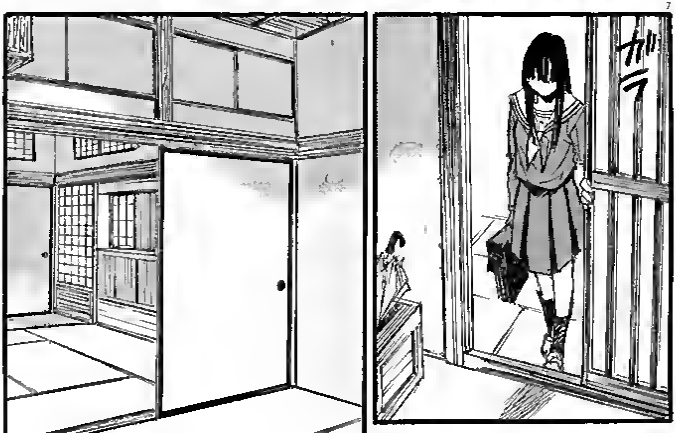




...GOOD-
BYE.


BYE,
FUKA-
ZAWA.

WHOA, SHE CAN TALK AFTER ALL!
SHE CAN HEAR YOU, Y KNOW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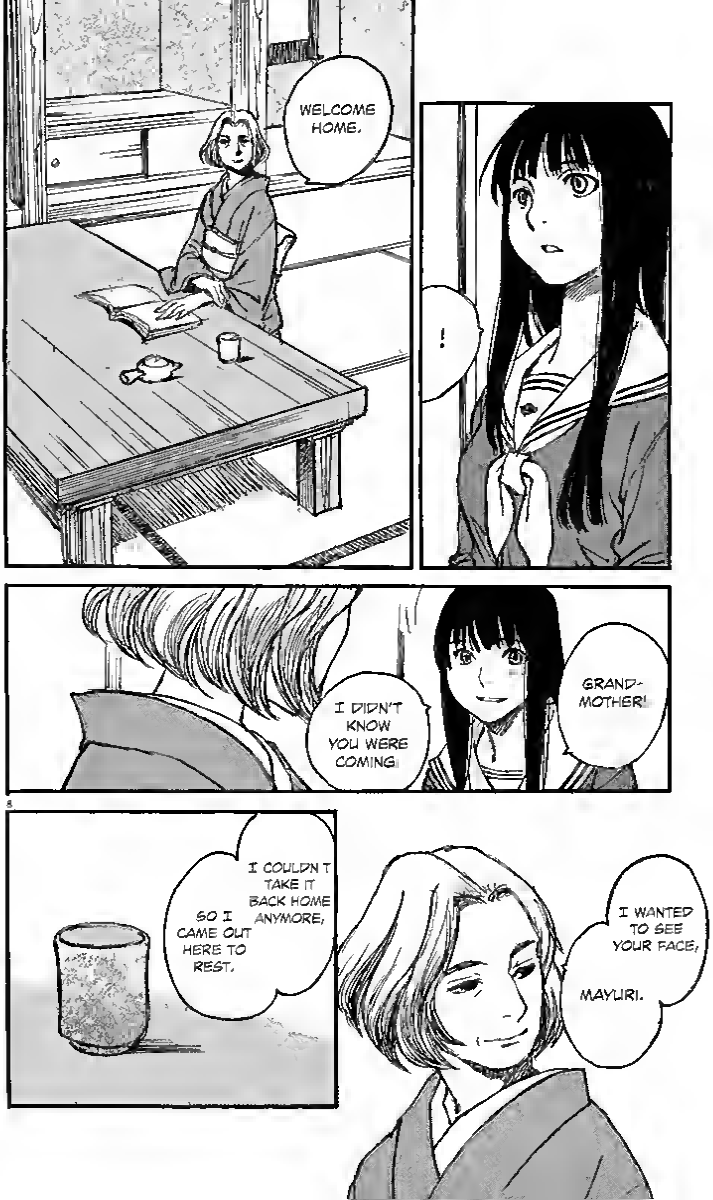
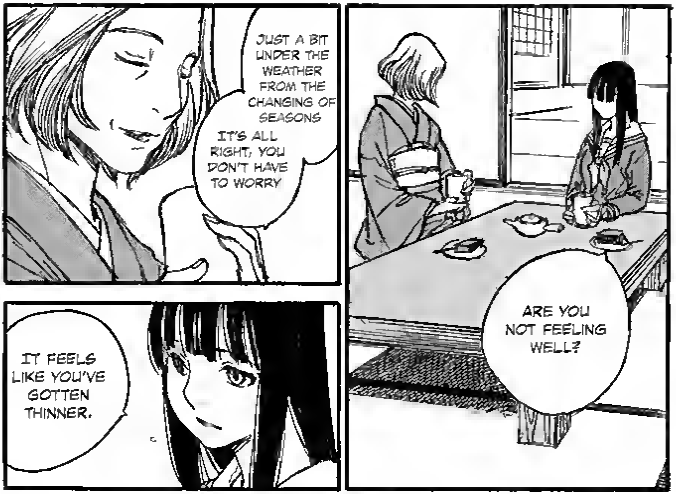
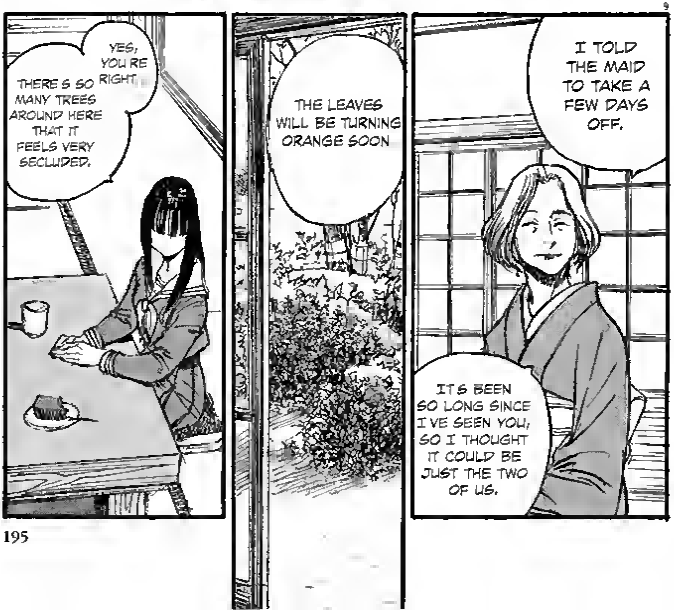
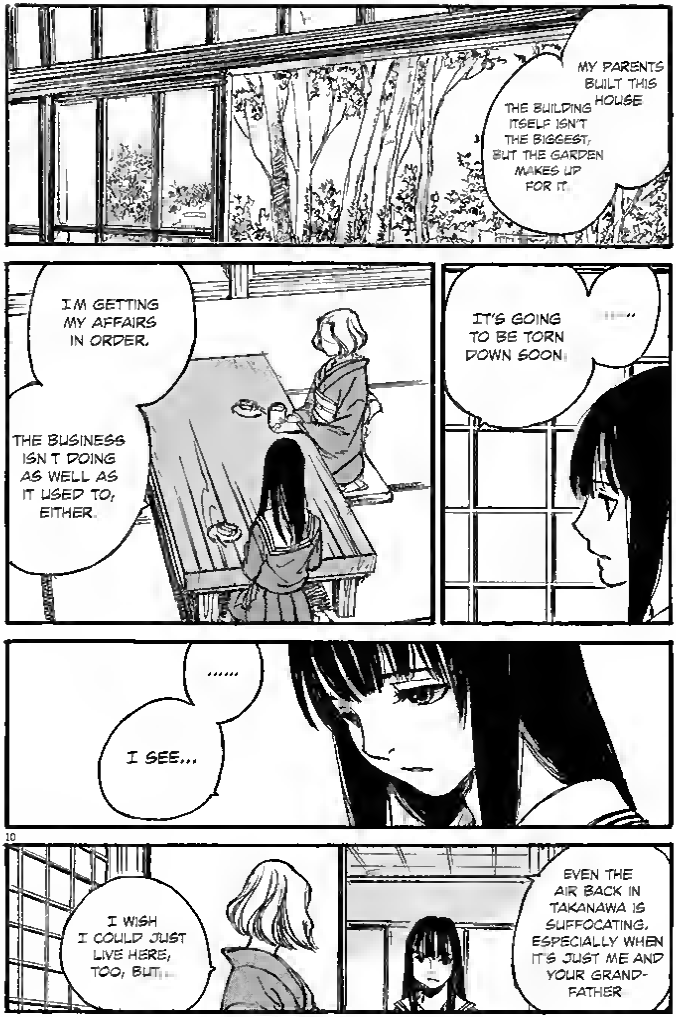
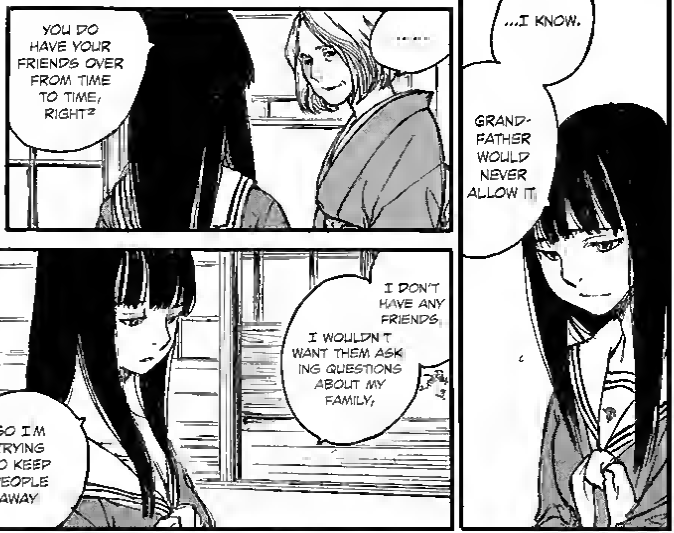
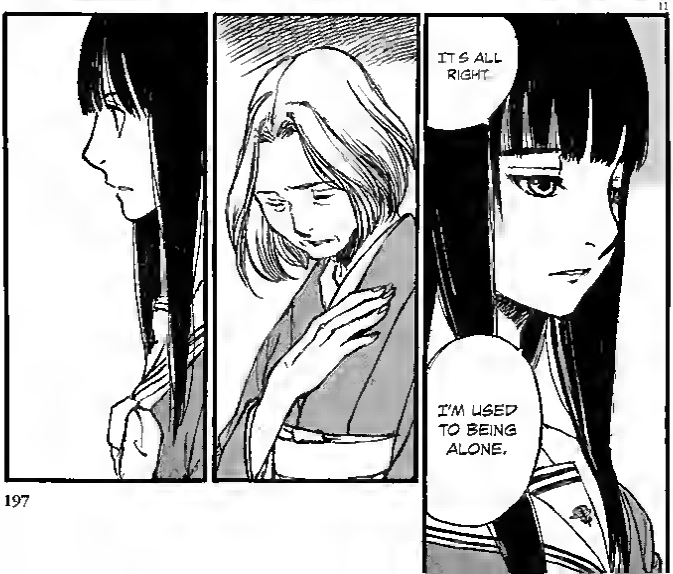

WELCOME HOME.
!
GRAND-MOTHER!
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE COMING.
I COULDN'T TAKE IT BACK HOME ANYMORE, SO I CAME OUT HERE TO REST.
I WANTED TO SEE YOUR FACE, MAYURI.

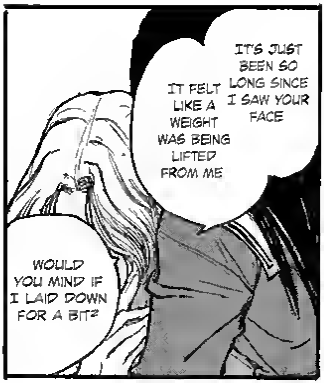

JUST A BIT UNDER THE WEATHER FROM THE CHANGING OF SEASONS
IT'S ALL RIGHT, YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY
ARE YOU NOT FEELING WELL?
IT FEELS LIKE YOU'VE GOTTEN THINNER.

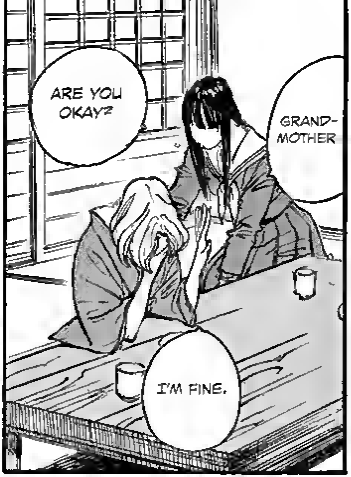

I TOLD THE MAID TO TAKE A FEW DAYS OFF.
IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'VE SEEN YOU, SO I THOUGHT IT COULD BE JUST THE TWO OF US.
THE LEAVES WILL BE TURNING ORANGE SOON
YES, YOU'RE RIGHT. THERE'S SO MANY TREES AROUND HERE THAT IT FEELS VERY SECLUDED.

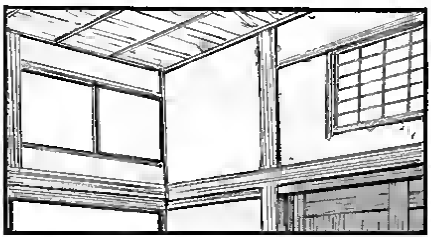

MY PARENTS BUILT THIS HOUSE.
THE BUILDING ITSELF ISN'T THE BIGGEST, BUT THE GARDEN MAKES UP FOR IT.
I'M GETTING MY AFFAIRS IN ORDER.
THE BUSINESS ISN'T DOING AS WELL AS IT USED TO, EITHER.
IT'S GOING TO BE TORN DOWN SOON.
.....
I SEE...
I WISH I COULD JUST LIVE HERE, TOO, BUT...
EVEN THE AIR BACK IN TAKANAWA IS SUFFOCATING, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT'S JUST ME AND YOUR GRANDFATHER


YOU DO HAVE YOUR FRIENDS OVER FROM TIME TO TIME, RIGHT?
...I KNOW.
GRAND-FATHER WOULD NEVER ALLOW IT.
I DON'T HAVE ANY FRIENDS.
I WOULDN'T WANT THEM ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT MY FAMILY.
SO I'M TRYING TO KEEP PEOPLE AWAY.


IT'S ALL RIGHT.
I'M USED TO BEING ALONE.


IT'S JUST BEEN SO LONG SINCE I SAW YOUR FACE
IT FELT LIKE A WEIGHT WAS BEING LIFTED FROM ME
WOULD YOU MIND IF I LAID DOWN FOR A BIT?


ARE YOU OKAY?
GRAND-MOTHER
I'M FINE.



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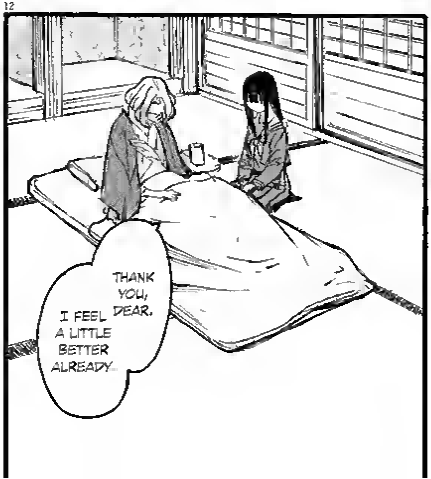
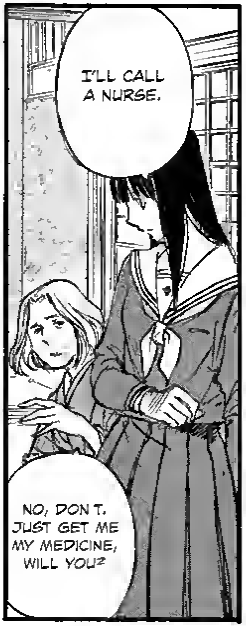
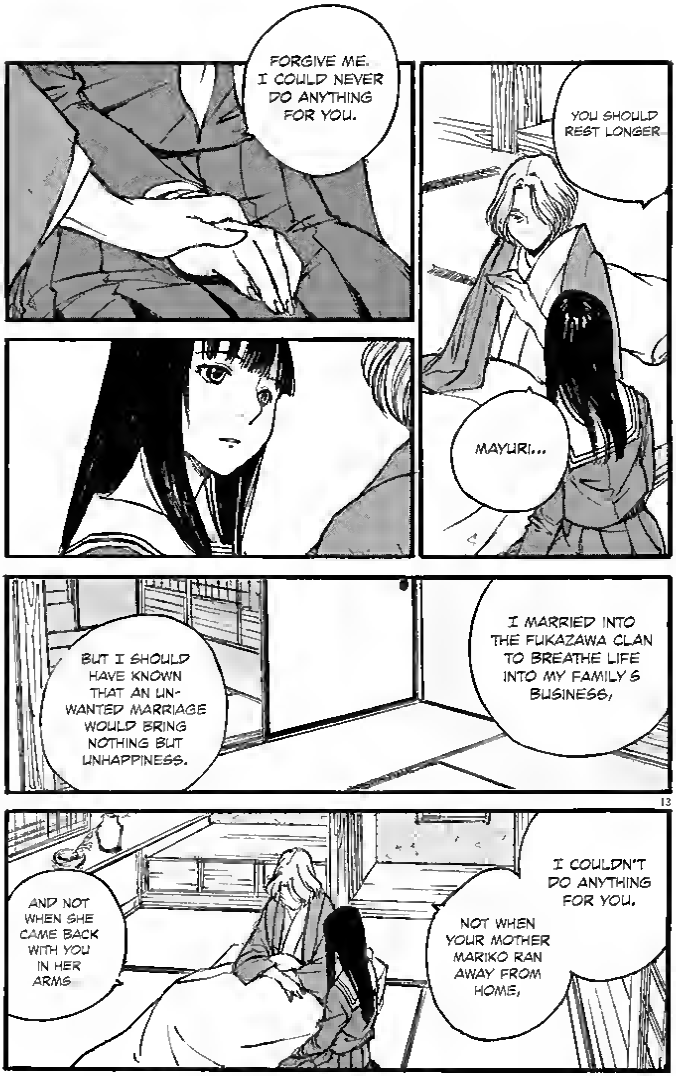

THANK YOU, I FEEL DEAR. A LITTLE BETTER ALREADY.


I'LL CALL A NURSE.
NO, DON'T. JUST GET ME MY MEDICINE, WILL YOU?


FORGIVE ME. I COULD NEVER DO ANYTHING FOR YOU.
YOU SHOULD REST LONGER.
MAYURI...
I MARRIED INTO THE FUKAZAWA CLAN TO BREATHE LIFE INTO MY FAMILY'S BUSINESS,
BUT I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT AN UNWANTED MARRIAGE WOULD BRING NOTHING BUT UNHAPPINESS.
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I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING FOR YOU.
NOT WHEN YOUR MOTHER MARIKO RAN AWAY FROM HOME,
AND NOT WHEN SHE CAME BACK WITH YOU IN HER ARMS.

THERE'S NOBODY WHO CAN GO AGAINST GRANDFATHER'S WISHES.
I WANT YOU TO LEAVE THIS PLACE WHEN I'M GONE.
THERE'S A COTTAGE IN YOKOHAMA UNDER MY OWN NAME.
IT BELONGED TO MY PARENTS, SO EVEN YOUR GRANDFATHER PROBABLY DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT IT.
I'VE TOLD MY LAWYER TO GET THE PAPERS IN ORDER FOR YOU.
I WANT YOU TO BE FREE...

IF ONLY...
IF ONLY I'D HAD THE COURAGE TO THROW EVERYTHING AWAY BACK THEN...

Three months later, I received word that my grandmother had passed away.

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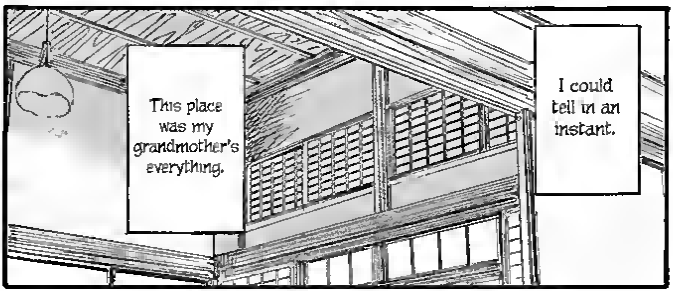
This place was my grandmother's everything.
I could tell in an instant.

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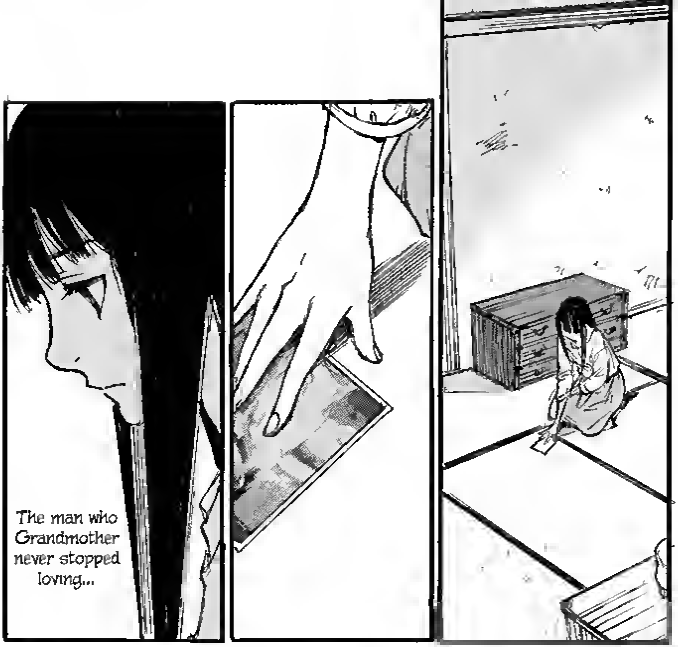
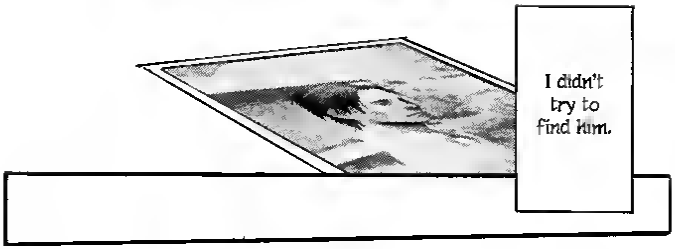
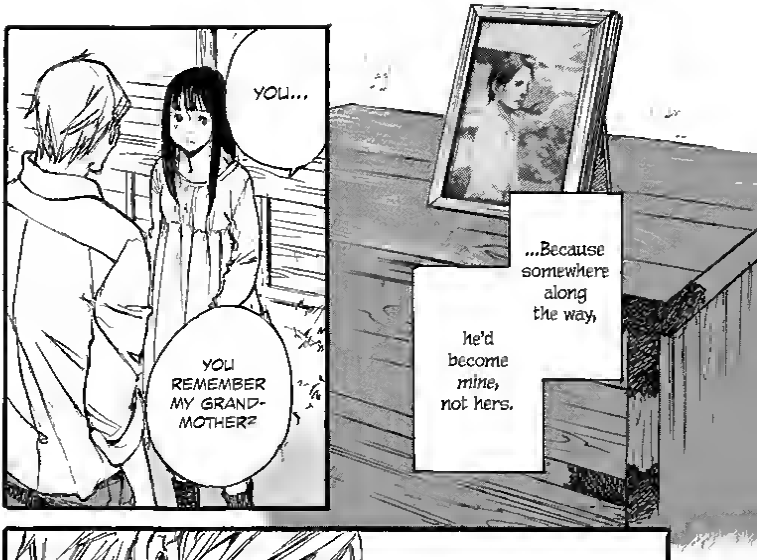
All the things she'd held close to her heart, the things she'd given up for the sake of her family.


The man who Grandmother never stopped loving...


I didn't try to find him.

Because the thought of knowing terrified me. And also because ..


YOU...
YOU REMEMBER MY GRAND-MOTHER?
...Because somewhere along the way,
he'd become mine, not hers.

...I TRIED TO FORGET.

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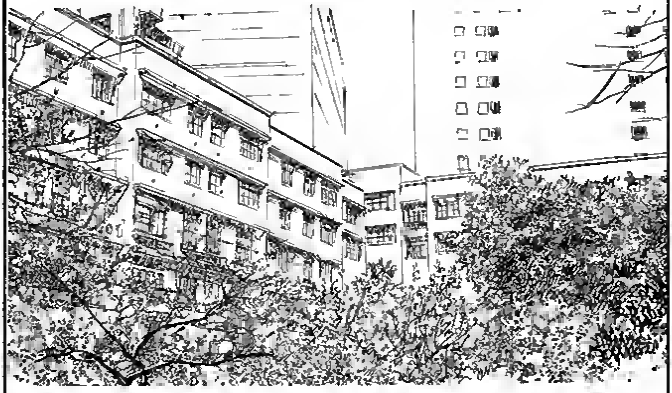
The time that had been standing still began moving once more.
I WANTED TO SEE YOU.
I...
マホロミ 時空警察分館 2 完

3集に続く

Afterword

I was shooting for two volumes before the year was out, but alas, *Spirits* is a weekly magazine, so I had to draw up a sizable amount before the first chapter goes into print. There was nearly a year of hiatus after that dried up, so thank you so much for waiting. I'll try to get the third volume out faster.

I started this series because I loved contemporary architecture, but the hours of my work made it really hard to go around researching buildings myself, so it's kind of sad.



I had the fortune to see the Doujunkai Edogawa apartment complex when I was a student, and it made a huge impression on me. Maybe that was where all this started. The sight of that crumbling concrete was so amazing. Old buildings project a real sense of presence and weight just by existing, I think.

2013. 1月